

Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 /056 W

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R 270853Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8092

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 562

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV KS

SUBJECT: KIM TAE-CHUNG ADDS VOICE TO ANTI-REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

REF: SEOUL 0521

1. FORMER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE KIM TAE-CHUNG HAS ADDED HIS VOICE TO INCREASING OPPOSITION APPEALS FOR ABANDONMENT OF REFERENDUM PLANS. GOVERNMENT, MEANWHILE, HAS GIVEN NO CLEAR SIGNAL AS TO HOW RESTRICTIONS ON APPEALS FOR REFERENDUM BOYCOTT WILL BE APPLIED.

2. IN HIS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE SINCE HE WAS KIDNAPPED BY KCIA IN JAPAN IN 1973, KIM TAE-CHUNG JAN 25 APPEALED TO PRESIDENT PARK TO ABANDON REFERENDUM PLANS AND TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS. HE CLAIMED RESTRICTIONS ON SPEECH AND PRESS, CREATED SITUATION IN WHICH IT WAS MEANINGLESS TO ASK PEOPLE TO VOTE ON YUSHIN SYSTEM. IF A REFERENDUM IS TO BE HELD, KIM SAID, PRESENT REFERENDUM LAW WOULD HAVE TO BE CHANGED TO ALLOW CAMPAIGNING ON ISSUES AND TO GUARANTEE FAIR VOTING AND BALLOT COUNTING. KIM ALSO ASKED PARK TO REMOVE PRESSURES ON TONGA ILBO, WHICH HE CLAIMED WERE OF SORT NOT

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EXPERIENCED EVEN UNDER JAPANESE DOMINATION. KIM'S

INTERVIEW GIVEN FULL COVERAGE IN TONGA ILBO AND
CARRIED TO LESSER EXTENT BY OTHER PAPERS.

3. ALTHOUGH GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT BOYCOTT APPEALS
WERE ILLEGAL (REFTEL), IT HAS BEEN UNCLEAR SO FAR AS
TO HOW STRICTLY SUCH RESTRICTIONS WILL BE APPLIED.
PROSECUTOR GENERAL ANNOUNCED JAN 24 THAT BOYCOTT
ISSUE WOULD BE CONSIDERED ON A "CASE-BY-CASE" BASIS,
WHILE ON JAN 26, CENTRAL ELECTION MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE, WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO RENDER DECISION ON
WHETHER SOME STATEMENTS ON REFERENDUM B KIM YONG-SAM'S
AND NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY
CONSTITUTED POSSIBLE VIOLATION OF LAW, DUCKED ISSUE
BY REFERRING IT TO MINISTRY OF JUSTICE.

4. COMMENT: THUS FAR, OPPOSITION ELEMENTS ARE VIGOROUSLY
PUSHING BOYCOTT ISSUE, AND WITH TONGA ILBO AND TONGA
RADIO STILL INFIGHTING MOOD, THEY HAVE BEEN GUARANTEED
MAJOR MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR THEIR APPEALS AND STATEMENTS.
WITH KIM YONG-SAM DUE BACK IN SEOUL JAN 28,
EXTENT TO WHICH NDP READY TO GO IN CONFRONTATION
SHOULD BECOME CLEARER IN FEW DAYS. GOVERNMENT
APPEARS TO BE TEMPORIZING AT THE MOMENT AS TO HOW
STRICTLY IT WILL REACT TO THIS SORT OF ACTIVITY,
EVIDENTLY AWARE THAT A HARSH CLAMP-DOWN WILL TEND
TO DETRACT FROM HOPED-FOR EFFECTS OF REFERENDUM
VOTE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: OPPOSITION PARTIES, PARTY LEADERS, PRESS CONFERENCES, REFERENDUMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SEOUL00562
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750030-0400
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750117/aaaaapar.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 SEOUL 0521
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <16 JUL 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KIM TAE-CHUNG ADDS VOICE TO ANTI-REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, KS, (KIM TAE-CHUNG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006